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Federal Election Commission
Office of Complaints Examination and Legal
Administration
Attn: Kathryn Ross, Paralegal
999 E Street NW
Washington, DC 20436

Re: MUR 7167 - Senator Roy Blunt, Friends of Roy Blunt, Gordon A. Elliott in his Capacity as
Treasurer of Friends of Roy Blunt

To Whom It May Concern:

This correspondence issues on behalf of Friends of Roy Blunt ("FRB"), Gordon A. Elliott (in his official capacity as Treasurer of FRB), and Senator Roy Blunt (collectively, the "Respondents") with respect to the complaint filed with the Federal Election Commission ("FEC" or the "Commission") by Ms. Linda Lou Brown (the "Complainant") on October 24, 2016 - MUR 7167 (the "Complaint"). Please accept this letter as an initial response to the specious claims made by Ms. Brown in the Complaint and as a formal request by the Respondents to dismiss the present matter without further consideration.

In contentious and competitive election cycles, political parties and candidates often seek to attack their electoral opponents by filing vacuous ethics and campaign finance complaints that allege wrongdoing and nefarious conduct without any substantive foundation for such claims. Regardless of the illegitimacy of the assertions levied in such grievances, the mere act of submitting a complaint benefits the filing party's supported candidate by generating undesirable publicity for their opponent, knocking their opponent off his/her positive campaign message, and forcing their opponent to dedicate time and resources to responding to empty accusations. Such activity is an all-too-common ploy around the country, and has become a particularly favored tactic in recent years by the Missouri Democratic Party (MDP), its candidates, and its supporters. In fact, Respondents and the FEC have had to address similar empty complaints lodged by the MDP and its proxies in previous election cycles. It seems the pattern continues.

In the present matter, Ms. Brown - a supporter of Democrat U.S. Senate Candidate Jason Kander and proxy for the MDP - filed this entirely baseless and speculative Complaint approximately two weeks before the conclusion of the 2016 general election in Missouri. Complainant's goal, as is readily apparent from the timing and contents of the Complaint, as well as the simultaneous leaking of its submission to news outlets within the state¹, was to benefit Mr. Kander's electoral chances by generating negative media coverage of Senator Blunt in the weeks leading up to the November 8th election and by forcing

¹ For example, it appears that the simultaneous with filing the present Complaint with the FEC, the Complainant, the MDP, and/or those affiliated with both leaked its contents to multiple media outlets in the State of Missouri, including: The Kansas City Star (<http://www.kansascity.com/news/local/news-columns-blogs/the-buzz/article110436462.html>); St. Louis Public Radio (<http://news.stlpublicradio.org/post/his-record-blunt-says-his-past-and-his-work-reflect-views-and-values-most-missourians#stream/>); and others.

FRB to expend precious campaign resources defending itself before the FEC and in the court of public opinion. In light of these facts, the current Complaint represents nothing more than a baseless political document designed to reap electoral benefits in a news cycle that has long-since passed. As such, it would be a waste of the Commission's resources, in the face of its overwhelming workload, to lend any credence to Ms. Brown's allegations or to expend any effort investigating her groundless claims. Fortunately, the Complaint itself is so facially speculative and lacking in merit that immediate dismissal is the only appropriate course of action.

The utter lack of factual support for the coordination allegations raised by the Complainant in this matter is striking, even when judged against the standard of numerous other desperate filings received by the Commission each election season. In this matter, to support an otherwise unsubstantiated allegation that Respondents have coordinated with Susan B. Anthony's List ("SBA List") and Women Speak Out PAC ("Women Speak") when it comes to independent expenditure activity in the State of Missouri, Ms. Brown is forced to rely on a single online news article from CNN.com insinuating that Senator Blunt called SBA List President Marjorie Dannerfelser at some point in early-to-mid October 2016 asking the organization to "raise more money". (See Complaint, pg. 3). Setting aside the fact that the article is poorly researched and ignorant as to the complexities of federal campaign finance law, it nevertheless contains absolutely no evidence to establish that any independent expenditure communications or activities undertaken by SBA List or Women Speak were at all coordinated with Respondents. Similarly, the Complaint itself offers no information or data to corroborate Ms. Brown's coordination charge or even render it worthy of further investigation. In light of these facts, it is abundantly clear that the Complainant's allegations lack any reasonable basis for further review and must be summarily dismissed.

In looking at the "details" of the Complainant's present submission to the FEC, it is readily apparent that Ms. Brown makes no effort whatsoever to establish that the FEC's coordination standard (11 C.F.R. §109.21 *et seq.*) has been met in the present factual context. While Ms. Brown makes passing reference to the payment, content and conduct prongs necessary to prove coordination under the Federal Election Campaign Act (hereinafter the "Act") and relevant FEC regulations (see Complaint, pg. 4), she proffers absolutely no evidence whatsoever to demonstrate that Complainants coordinated with either SBA List or Women Speak to facilitate illegal in-kind contributions to FOYB. Rather than support her claims with facts and/or legal arguments, Complainant simply makes an unfounded, blanket assertion that Senator Blunt engaged in "backchannel communications" to direct the political activities of SBA List and Women Speak in Missouri. Such declarations are not only laughable, but they also fail to provide the Commission with any justifiable reason to believe that either SBA List or Women Speak made independent-expenditure communications opposing Jason Kander at the request or suggestion of, or in consultation with, the Respondents. Without the presence of any evidence backing Ms. Brown's claims, there is no reasonable basis upon which to assert that Respondents accepted any sort of illegal in-kind contribution from SBA List or Women Speak in the present setting, nor is their adequate grounds for sustaining the present Complaint.

The plain and simple truth in the current factual setting is that no coordination occurred between Respondents and anyone (including SBA List and Women Speak) during the 2016 election cycle, or at any other time. Although the Complainant has attempted to dress-up a partisan political attack as a violation of federal campaign finance law, it is readily clear that no legal violation has occurred under the Act or applicable FEC regulations. Ms. Brown's claims to the contrary have absolutely no basis in either law or fact and, as such, should be immediately dismissed as they pertain to the Respondents. For these reasons and for the sake of discouraging similar efforts to abuse the FEC's complaint review process, the Commission should appropriately dismiss the instant Complaint without further investigation and reach a determination that there is no reason to believe that the Respondents have violated federal law.

